



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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Vol. 23, No. 4
May 15, 2009

by

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OVERVIEW

Black drum fishing has really turned on this week throughout the area, in perfect timing with the Black Drum World Championship Fishing Tournament to be held this upcoming weekend, May 16 and 17, at the Bay Creek Marina, in Cape Charles (www.esvachamber.org/festivals/drumfish). The VMRC Biological Sampling Team will be there assisting with the tournament and sampling fish. Check back with us next week for results and pictures!

Flounder fishing in Chincoteague has been incredibly productive. Just consider the waters surrounding the island to be one big “hot spot.” The first few citations of the year have shown up for speckled trout, drum, and striped bass around the bay. The local piers are seeing fishing pick up with the usual suspects (croaker, spot, sea mullet, bluefish, etc).



And speaking of piers, we are happy to announce that the Buckroe Fishing Pier in Hampton will hold the Grand Opening on May 30th! Both the Marine Sportfish Collection Project, and the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program, will be in place by the opening. We were able to sneak in for a few shots of this fantastic new pier, still under construction, this week! We look forward to including fishing reports from the Buckroe Fishing Pier in this review.

Please note: the Virginia Saltwater Review is only available online. Please feel free to print and distribute to your club or organization as needed.

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

Donna at Captain Bob's reports that despite the wind and rain, fishing is HOT! The hot spots are everywhere! Anglers are catching flounder in the main channel from Inlet View Campground, north to the Coast Guard Base. Most of the fish are found in deep water. The structures and pilings of Queen's Sound are producing well, and numerous fish have been found in the Assateague Channel. According to Donna, any drop off of any embankment in the area seems to be producing fish. The beach is sizzling with black drum and striped bass, grey trout are around the channels, and kingfish are beginning to show up. The best baits thus far have been smelt, minnows, and gulp. Squid has been less effective in the cooler waters.

Wachapreague

At the Wachapreague Marina, we were told that this is probably the best year for black drum that the area has seen in a long time. Loads of black drum and striped bass have been found in the surf and in the inlet. Black sea bass fishing has been decent on the wrecks. There have also been numerous flounder, and about 1 in 15 is a keeper.

Anglers were reporting black drum over the last weekend at Captain Zed's. Others in the area had success with black sea bass and flounder.

Cape Charles

Nice black drum have been found at Buoy 13 near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, according to staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle. There were also reports of croaker in the Occohannock Creek near Morley's Wharf. Flounder were reported from the Ditch area and in the creeks near Oyster. There are also still a few striped bass around for catch-and-release fishing.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel

A citation red drum (47 pounds) was reported from the Sunset Boating Center. The drum was landed on May 8th from Fisherman's Island. Staff also reported a 35-pound and a 37-pound striped bass, both from the 4th Island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Other local reports included grouper catches at the Hampton Bar.

According to staff at the York River Fishing Center, croaker could be found in the York River this weekend, especially by those fishing at the Gloucester Point Pier. Mobjack Bay is starting to produce some speckled trout, and anglers have been catching undersized flounder in the area. This week, a 12-year-old from Hayes, VA brought in a citation-sized speckled trout weighing in at 5 pounds, 5 ounces. This lucky young angler landed this fish from the Ware River.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

The black drum bite is wide open. It is just in time for the Black Drum World Championship: www.esvachamber.org/festivals/drumfish. Big boomers are being caught near Buoys 16, 13, and 10 along the Eastern Shore side of the bay. Large red drum are also being caught. Some are being caught in the black drum fleet near Buoy 10 and on 9-Foot-Shoal. These areas will heat up, but so far, the best red drum action has been found in the surf from Fisherman's and Smith Islands. Keep your eyes out for pop-up satellite tags. Large red drum are being tagged at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. These tags will release from the fish after a pre-programmed amount of time. Returned tags are worth \$100. Flounder fishing has been slow but should pick up as the water continues to clear from the heavy rainfall over the past couple of weeks. The speckled trout bite has turned on in Mobjack Bay with peeler crab floated over the grass beds producing the best catches. Some speckled trout are also being caught on Poquoson Flats. Nice striped bass are being caught along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, especially around the rock islands and over the tubes. From May 16 through June 15, you are allowed to keep 2 rockfish per person. The fish must be in the 18-28 inch range except one of these fish may be 32 inches or longer. Any kept fish 32 inches or longer must be reported. Croaker are available for bottom bouncers and some spot are showing in the catches. Not much has been happening in Virginia's offshore waters. Boats fishing out of the Outer Banks have been bringing in some nice catches of dolphin and yellowfin tuna. Cobia catches have been good out of Hatteras.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The black drum action finally took off with a bang during the full moon phase this past week. Many boats reported tangling with dozens of large blacks while fishing on the bayside and ocean-side shoals off the Eastern Shore. But with over 50 boats reported in a small area on the ocean-side shoals one evening, the fishing pressure scattered the fish. Expect these gentle giants to make a quiet comeback once they regroup. The bait-stealing critters are also making a debut for drum anglers.

Big red drum are still patrolling the breakers off Smith and Fisherman's Islands, with the incoming tide providing the best results. The red action will only improve. The folks at Chris' Bait and Tackle report that surf anglers are faring very well on the reds from Smith and Myrtle Islands, with good sized striped bass up to 44 inches also taking offerings. Blue crabs and peelers are working well.

Flounder action around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel is still off, but anglers working the various lower Bay and Eastern Shore inlets and shallower backwaters, are finding some keepers. One angler had five flatties ranging up to 5 pounds while fishing with minnows off of Newport News this week. Striped bass are supplementing the flounder catches. Top water plugs presented to the rocks of the 3rd and 4th islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel are producing nice fish up to 45 inches. Live baiting over the tubes is also a good method to try right now.

Tautog have not slowed with the warming water, but only catch and release is permitted for these fish until June. Look for sheepshead and spadefish to show soon.

Croaker are active within the tributary rivers, and all over the lower bay. Anglers are finding very good numbers of hardheads averaging up to near a pound off Ocean View and Little Creek. A few large spot and sea mullet are also mixed in. Squid and bloodworms get the nod this week as the top baits.

Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are still dominating the lower bay inlets and shallows. Some folks are

also targeting pups within the Elizabeth River with good success. A few speckled trout and bluefish are biting within Rudee Inlet, with scattered keeper flounder also available in the same areas. Speckled trout action on the Eastern Shore is still spotty, with a few takers coming from the seaside area of Oyster.

Keeper black sea bass are coming from near-shore wrecks, with bigger fish up to five pounds still available further offshore. If blueline tilefish and grouper are your desire, plenty are available in deeper water, but with other species making a showing closer to shore, this fishery will probably get a break.

Virginia Middle Bay

Roger, at Jett's Hardware, reports the winds are blowing currently, but once it lets up, the striped bass will be waiting. Things are still status quo for croaker, and the best places to look for them are still the rivers. There is some evidence that small bluefish are moving into the area, as well.

Dan, at Smith's Point Marina, reports numerous striped bass and croaker. There was a citation for a striped bass this week weighing in at 41 pounds.

Capt. Jim Thompson reports that the croaker have started biting. They are really nice fish, but their desires for bait are changing by the day. One day it was shrimp, another worms or squid, so it is best to take all three with you. The rivers are not producing much with the exception of upriver in the Rappahannock or York Rivers, but the Eastern Shore is good at the present time. It looks like the croaker are going to be here until July this year. Striped bass action is good at Buoy 62 and above for those doing spring fishing, but the fishing is only fair. Flounder are moving into the Cell area.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

The Mobjack Bay speckled trout bite began last Wednesday with the brightening moon and the beginning of the first peeler shed. We registered two citations on May 6th (5 pounds, 7 ounces and 5 pounds, 2 ounces). Since the full moon, peelers are producing, with fish being caught from the shore floating peelers in the shallows, particularly in the evening. Striped bass are mixed in, and drum will soon follow in the same waters, particularly over hard bottom.

In the next week or so, the Hole-in-the-Wall at Gwynn's Island and the Piankatank River should start producing speckled trout.

Flounder fishing has been unreliable for the past few weeks. A good early April run of fish indicated a possible strong start to the season, but the fish soon tapered off and we have yet to see a citation fish. Hopefully, we will see another run as waters warm.

Croaker are in the rivers and in the creeks. They are biting bloodworms, squid and peelers. Evening and early morning fishing in 2 to 5 feet of water is the most productive as the fish prowls the shoreline.

Virginia Beach

According to staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center, a few anglers have been going for flounder in the Bay. Most have found undersized flounder with a few keepers. Taylor bluefish have also shown up in inshore areas. Offshore, anglers are finding tuna, grouper, tilefish, and black sea bass.

Paula, from Fisherman's Wharf Marina reports little activity this week due to the breezy weather. However, the Chesapeake Bay striped bass trophy fishing is doing really well. A lot of nice fish have been coming from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel area.

Virginia Piers

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Outer Banks, NC

Water temperatures have reached the lower 60's on the northern beaches and upper 60's at Hatteras. Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet continues to be strong with yellow and blackfin tuna, dolphin, king mackerel, wahoo, and amberjack being the main targets. Offshore bottom fishing was producing blueline tilefish and snowy grouper. Billfish catches were still slow. Midrange offshore catches were still slow with no notable catches. Nearshore catches continued with spotted sea trout holding in deeper water holes off of the beaches. Surf fishing was also keeping anglers lines tight with sea mullet, spot croaker, bluefish, and puffers as long as people were able to avoid the skates. Inshore fishing saw good action on good sized speckled trout up to four pounds.

On the beaches, south of Oregon Inlet, things are heating up. Large red drum are starting to show up with a 44-inch specimen around Ramp 44 along with a few Spanish mackerel. Large bluefish are showing up in good numbers wherever people are putting out lines. Sea mullet are sticking to areas with cooler water. The onset of the cobia has people really fired up, although this has been limited to boat fishermen.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras Inlet has had good numbers of blackfin tuna and wahoo being brought in with smaller numbers of king mackerel and amberjack. Inshore fishing has also been strong, with large red drum and cobia working in the inlets and bluefish filling in the spaces.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at 757.247.2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resource Commission's The Virginia Saltwater Review as the source of the fishing information.









ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM
			
TAUTOG	KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)
*Coming soon to the nearly completed
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)***

As of 01/15/2009



ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

Get Hooked!
Report at
www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

A screenshot of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's "Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" website. The header includes the commission's name and logo. The main content area is titled "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" and includes a "Welcome Jgrist," message. There are two main sections: "Red Drum Reports are Needed!" which states that length data is being collected for a stock assessment, and "New 2008 Tautog Regs" which lists the closed season (May 1 through June 24), minimum size limit (14 inches), and possession limit (4 per person). A sidebar on the left shows statistics for June 16, 2008: 1,457 members, 295 trips, and 3,941 catches. At the bottom, there are "Related Links" and a "Feedback" section.

VMRC introduces the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

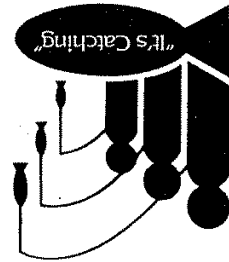
Launched in February, 2009, in conjunction with the Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the VMRC has placed collection bins for monofilament fishing line across the state. Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for fish, birds, marine mammals, and boaters by depositing any used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers (see photo). Several of our Saltwater Review partners have placed bins at their locations including Captain Bob's Marina, Chris' Bait and Tackle, the Ocean View Fishing Pier, and Jett's Hardware. If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new bin locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



**Coming Soon to the Buckroe Fishing Pier! See you at the
May 30th Grand Opening!!!**

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Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water